

## **Wayne State University Testimony on Senate Bill 432**

Chairman Johnson and members of the Committee: thank you for allowing us the opportunity to testify on this legislation that will create jobs and private investment in Detroit.

Among the many goals Wayne State University has to help improve the Midtown area of Detroit is the expansion of the on-campus residential population. Bottom line: we want to bring more people downtown.

We hope to increase the number of students and faculty living on or near campus by 3,000 in the next decade. For the university and region to continue its growth, we want to create a vibrant 24/7 walkable community with retail development.

A community that is attractive for people to live, work and go to school; and for businesses to invest.

Toward that end, a study commissioned in 2003 found that there is demand for market-rate apartments and condominiums in the Midtown area that will attract private investment.

In 2006, the University authorized agreements between the University and Prime Development, Inc. from Grand Rapids. Under the agreement, Prime Development would construct, own and operate a residential/retail complex, known as South Village, on land owned by WSU along Woodward Avenue between Forest and Canfield.

As proposed under the lease agreement, the developer provided primarily private financing for the complex. The development was completed in the summer of 2008.

We feel this unique public/private partnership is a success and will only continue to create jobs and improve the region, but for one technical snag that brings us here today.

Starter's Bar & Grill, which is one of the tenants in the South Village Complex, has already secured a private market liquor license, subject to local quotas. However, the MI Liquor Control Commission is unable to finalize the transfer of this license to Starter's because the underlying land is owned by the University. A similar technical change was made in 1996 to accommodate a private hotel development at CMU – we asking that you allow this change before you today by supporting Senate Bill 432.